

G. G. Thompson House
Tuskegee, Alabama.
Macon Co.

HABS No. 16-542.

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer
Ala. Polytechnic Inst., Auburn, Ala.

G. C. Thompson house, Tuskegee, AlabamaHistorical Data

Built about 1850 by Peter Coffee Harris who lived there for about three years. In 1853 he moved to a plantation 9 miles from Tuskegee.

Later Owners:

Judge Tate, 1853 -

M. B. Swanson

W. P. Thompson

G. Cleveland Thompson, present owner

President William McKinley:

Visited Tuskegee in 1898. He addressed the inhabitants of Tuskegee from the veranda of this home.

C. W. Thompson:

Member of Congress, Washington, was buried from this house. Much entertainment during his time.

H. B. Steagall:

Member of Congress, Washington. Married in this home to Sallie Mae Thompson, sister of the Honorable C. W. Thompson. Here a large and magnificent reception was given to the bridal party.

Sources of Material:

The Thompson Family, Tuskegee, Alabama
Miss Annette Howard, Tuskegee, Alabama
Old Inhabitants of Tuskegee, Alabama
Major General P. C. Harris, Washington, D. C.

Peter A. Brannon, Department of Archives and History, State of Alabama, Montgomery, Ala., approved notes.

Reviewed 1936 H. C. F.

G. C. THOMPSON HOUSE
Tuskegee, Macon County, Alabama.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

In plan, the mansion is square, with two-storey porches at front and rear, and one-storey porches at the sides. The hallway on the first floor is cruciform, separating four rooms of equal size. On the north arm of the hall rises the stairway in circular fashion, passing a niche at the second floor level.

A flattened dome rests on elliptical plaster arches in the center of the hall. The arches spring from carved wooden brackets.

The columns on the rear porch are octagonal with crude capitals. On the front portico, however, the columns are round and fluted, with carved wooden capitals like those at Edfu ¹ or Pergamon ².

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1. Temple of Horus, Edfu, Egypt.
 2. Stoa of Eumenes, Pergamon, Asia Minor.

(Revised at HABS Headquarters
Feb. 12, 1936 - H.C.F.)
(Original sheet in field notebook).

April 19, 1941

Mr. Peter A. Brannon,
Department of Archives and History,
Montgomery, Alabama.

My dear Mr. Brannon:

My niece, Dean Agnes Ellen Harris, of the University of Alabama, has sent me copies of your letter of April 7, 1941, and her reply thereto, dated April 11, 1941, relative to the old Harris home in Tuskegee, Alabama. She suggests that I write you directly and tell you what I know of the history of the old place.

My grandfather, Peter Coffee Harris, moved to Tuskegee in 1834. There my father, Charles Hooks Harris was born (1835) and reared. There, also, my mother spent the last two years of the Civil War. Both of my parents were thus familiar with the family life in Tuskegee up to and including 1865.

My father and mother often referred to the home built by my grandfather, Peter Coffee Harris, in Tuskegee, explaining that it was then owned and occupied by Mr. William Thompson. In 1890 my brothers, James Coffee Harris and William Julius Harris, and I made a pilgrimage, as we regarded it, to the old family home in Tuskegee. The principal place of interest to us was the house built by our grandfather, Peter Coffee Harris. The impression I had at that time and have always had was that the house we saw in 1890 was the one built by my grandfather and occupied for a time by his family.

That my grandfather's was no ordinary residence is shown from the following excerpts from the Personal and Family History of Charles Hooks and Margaret Monk Harris written by their son, James Coffee Harris, and published in 1911:

His father (Peter Coffee Harris) had built a really handsome home for his family in Tuskegee, a house that later went into the possession of the Thompsons. (Page 15)
After their marriage Peter (Peter Coffee Harris) and Narcissa moved to Tuskegee, and there they built one of the most beautiful homes in the State of Alabama. There they lived till their removal in 1853 to their plantation nine miles from Tuskegee. (Page 16).

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Mr. Peter A. Brammon,
Department of Archives and History,
Montgomery, Alabama.

In a prefatory note to "Letters from Peter Coffee Harris, Written 1856," James Coffee Harris states, "He (Peter Coffee Harris) built about 1850 a residence in Tuskegee that is still one of the most beautiful homes there". This gives a rather definite date, about 1850, for the construction or reconstruction by Peter Coffee Harris of his residence in Tuskegee. It is known, as indicated in the preceding paragraph, that he disposed of this place in 1853.

Information on which my brother, James Coffee Harris, based his statements, quoted above, was not mere family tradition. He obtained it first hand from our father, Charles Hooks Harris, who had personal knowledge of the facts. At the time his father, Peter Coffee Harris, rebuilt his Tuskegee home (about 1850) Charles Hooks Harris was 15 years of age. He lived in this home for about three years, or until 1853 when his father disposed of it. It is not at all probable that Charles Hooks Harris could have forgotten when that home was built or the nature or architecture of the building.

Permit me to add my own to the appreciation expressed by my niece, for your interest and kindness.

Very sincerely yours,

D. C. HARRIS

Major General, U. S. Army, retired.